

# Simmons joins the fight for road money

By SUSAN ROTH  
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WASHINGTON — Members of the Connecticut congressional delegation joined lawmakers from other states Wednesday to announce a new coalition to prevent changes in the federal funding formula for roads.

Congress is due to debate a six-year reauthorization of federal road funding this year, and the formula for distributing money to the states and territories is the key issue. Connecticut has enjoyed a beneficial rate of return for several decades, but Midwestern and Southern states that have received less money than they send to Washington in gasoline taxes are again seeking to change the formula. The change they want would cost Connecticut \$163 million in highway and transit funding.

As the year goes on and other issues crowd the congressional agenda, lobbyists say it looks less and less likely that lawmakers will deal with the complex road funding measure this year. They expect Congress to put off the issue and pass a one-year extension of the current formula instead.

Rep. Rob Simmons, R-Stonington, a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, said he wants to make sure Connecticut gets its share.

"The current road formula is fair," Simmons said, because it takes into account things like population figures, miles traveled and gasoline bought in each state. "For our colleagues to look at this narrowly is ridiculous. Connecticut sends more taxes to Washington overall than any other state in the union."

Republican Reps. Nancy Johnson of New Britain and Chris Shays of Bridgeport, and Democratic Rep. Rosa DeLauro of New Haven also joined the coalition, called the Fair Alliance for Intermodal Reinvestment.